

(6) dry panel mining 8 months (approximately March through November).

(7) no action.

3. Scoping and Public Involvement:

The scoping process will commence in late October 1998 with the issuance of a Scoping Notice. Federal, state and local agencies, Indian tribes, and interested organizations and individuals will be asked to comment on the significant issues relating to the potential effects of the alternatives. A formal public scoping meeting is planned for the evening of November 5, 1998 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. An informal open-house will be held the same day in Fernwood, Idaho at Emerald Creek Mining Company headquarters.

Potentially significant issues to be addressed in detail include the effects of the project on wetlands, wildlife and fish, endangered species, cultural resources, recreation, traffic, hazardous materials and waste, and any other issues revealed during the scoping process.

The Draft EIS will be prepared concurrently with other environmental compliance requirements, including the Endangered Species Act and the national Historic Preservation Act. The Corps intends to integrate the consultation procedures pursuant to these other statutes with the EIS. The Corps and the applicant have begun consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.

The proposed project also requires a placer mining permit from the State of Idaho Department of Lands as well as a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the State of Idaho Division of Environmental Quality.

4. Availability of the Draft EIS: The Draft EIS is scheduled for release in April 1999.

Gregory D. Showalter,

Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-28183 Filed 10-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3710-GC-M

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Ohio River Main Stem System Study

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DOD.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY:

a. The Great Lakes & Ohio River Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is evaluating alternative investment strategies for the maintenance of commercial navigation infrastructure on the Ohio River System for the next 50 years and for the restoration of habitats along the main stem of the Ohio River that have been degraded by cultural influences. The proposed action is being conducted under the authority of United States Senate, Committee on Public Works resolution dated May 16, 1955; and, United States House of Representatives, Committee on Public Works and Transportation resolution dated March 11, 1982.

b. The Corps of Engineers will conduct public scoping meetings at three locations along the main stem of the Ohio River to solicit input for the development of one or more draft Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for the project. These meetings will be conducted in an informal setting with "work stations" established for question and answer sessions and the submittal of comments relevant to the format and scope of the EIS. Meetings are scheduled as follows:

Date: November 17, 1998.

Time: 12:00-8:00 pm.

Place: Radisson Hotel, 600 Walnut Street, Evansville, IN, Phone: (800) 333-3333.

Date: November 19, 1998.

Time: 12:00-8:00 pm.

Place: Huntington Civic Arena, PO Box 2767, Huntington, WV, Phone: (304) 696-5990.

Date: November 24, 1998.

Time: 12:00-8:00 pm.

Place: David L. Lawrence Convention Center, 1001 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA, Phone: (412) 565-6000.

Interested parties are encouraged to provide oral comments relevant to the scope of the environmental analysis for the EIS at any of these public forums. Otherwise, please forward written scoping comments or requests for information to the following study contact.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Please address questions regarding this notice to Mr. Louis E. Aspey II, PD-F, Huntington District, Corps of Engineers, 502 Eighth Street, Huntington, West Virginia 25701-2070, Telephone: (304) 529-5638.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

a. The Ohio River Main Stem System Study is designed to capture foreseeable maintenance, rehabilitation and new construction needs for the navigation

infrastructure of the Ohio River until the year 2060 and to investigate habitat restoration options along the main stem Ohio River. The Study would also identify those actions which are economically justified and environmentally prudent. The final report will be advanced during 2002 for approval with implementation planning expected immediately.

b. The Corps of Engineers has been collecting data and pursuing approaches for the study of Ohio River Navigation since 1996. Preliminary economic analysis has indicated traffic congestion and economic losses for two of the nineteen Ohio River Locks & Dams associated with foreseeable maintenance cycles. This has prompted the Corps to pursue an Interim Ohio River Main Stem System Study Report to address this short-term need at Greenup Locks & Dam, Greenup, Kentucky; and John T. Myers Locks & Dam, Mount Vernon, Indiana. This interim report will be advanced in 2000 for approval and requesting authority to implement immediately. Economic losses for both of these structures are associated with future traffic levels being impacted during scheduled maintenance.

c. Feasible approaches to mitigating this economic loss vary with each Lock & Dam facility. However, the Corps has begun the review of small-capital improvements at each site to facilitate lockages using only the existing auxiliary lock chamber during scheduled outages. Extensions to the existing auxiliary chambers and new 1200 feet long lock chambers at the existing sites are also under consideration.

d. Interest in habitat restoration along the main stem of the Ohio River has also prompted consideration of a program to restore degraded habitats as part of a defined restoration program.

e. The EIS will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of construction and operation of the proposed project(s) including impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, and socioeconomic effects, air quality, noise impacts, and recreation resources. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Interim Report is expected to be available to the public in December 1999.

Daniel E. Steiner, P.E.,

Chief, Planning Division.

[FR Doc. 98-28182 Filed 10-20-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3710-85-M